
IMPRIMATUR.

Hen. Maurice Reverend. Willielm.
Cant. Archiepisc. a Sacris.

ERRATA.

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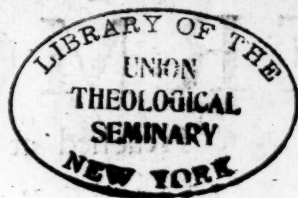
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A
SERMON
Preached at
WESTMINSTER-ABBET
On the 26th. of July, 1685.
BEING THE
THANKSGIVING-DAY
FOR HIS
MAJESTIES VICTORY
OVER THE
REBELS

By *Edward Pelling*, Chaplain to his
Grace the Duke of *Sommerfet*.

Printed at the Earnest desire of some Friends.

LONDON, Printed for *Samuel Keble* at the
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REBELS

By Edward P. Blyden, Chaplain to his

Grace the Prince of Wales

London: Printed by John W. Smith, 1852.

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(1)

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SERMON

PREACHED AT

WESTMINSTER-ABBEY

On the 26th. of July, 1685.

BEING THE

THANKSGIVING-DAY, &c.

Pfal 124. 6.

*Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given
us as a Prey to their Teeth.*

THe good Providence of God over
the Sacred Persons, and the just Go-
vernment of Princes, in preserving
both from the most malicious designs
of so many restless and sanguinary Spirits,

A 2

is

is one of the most stupendious Works of Gods Omnipotence that ever he hath shew'd since the last day of the Creation. A Miracle, which was the common subject of King *Dauids* thankful Meditations, up and down throughout his whole Book of Psalms, and particularly in *This* Psalm ; where, after a most humble manner, he doth adore the infinite Mercy and Power of God, for delivering Him and his Subjects from the threatening dangers of a fresh *Insurrection*. *If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say: If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us; they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: Then the Waters had over whelmed us, the stream had gone over our Soul: The proud Waters had gone even over our Soul.* When the *Insurrection* was so formidable, when the malice of wicked men was so outrageous, when their appetites were not to be satisfied but with streams of Blood ; when Ruin was breaking in upon the whole Land like a mighty Torrent ; when, without the immediate help

help of God, nothing could be expected, but utter Desolation; when the danger was so imminent, and seemingly so inevitable, that those men of violence thought themselves as sure as if the prey they sought after were already in the Gin; *Then* was the time for God to lay to his Hand, to make bare his Arm, and to gain himself Honour by rescuing Innocence from the Pit, as it lay at the Brink, ready to drop into the Depth of Destruction.

This Psalm was *David's* ^{Divine}, like the Eucharistical Sacrifice of *Jonah*, after he had been delivered from the belly of the Whale. And that I may not spend my time in a curious, but unnecessary division of the Text, let us fall directly; first upon the consideration of *David's* deliverance, which was the ground of his thankfulness; and the purport of the Psalm; and so proceed in the second place, to the consideration of our own deliverance, which is the reason of *Our* thankfulness, and the business of the Day.

1. As to that deliverance for which *David* here blest God, indeed Divines can-

not find out any one certain *Era*, on point of time, where to fix it. But if I may have leave to conjecture, I conceive, that *David* spake here in reference to those his *Signal Victories* over some Domestick Conspirators, whereof we find a most devout and grateful Commemoration in 2 *Sam.* 22. For several of the same expressions we meet with *there*, which we find in this *Psal.* *There* he spake, as he did *Here*, of the *Waves of Death*, of the *Floods* of ungodly Men, of many *Waters*, of *Snares*, of them that rose up against Him, and the like. Now it is evident, that in *that* place the King of *Israel* had in his mind, not only the former downfall of *Saul*, but chiefly the *late Victories* which God had given him over two formidable Traitors; the one a discontented, yet an Ordinary Subject, the other a Darling, but a graceless Son. Let us look a little, I beseech you, into the Story of both.

The discontented Subject I speak of, was that considerable man, *Sheba*: *Sheba* the Son of *Bichri*, as he is called eight times together in one Chapter. The Scripture seems

seems to set a mark of infamy upon his *Father*, as well as on *Himself*. Where-
 ever the Traitor is named, it is always *She-
 ba the Son of Bichri*, as if he were an *He-
 reditary* Rebel. Now *David's* deliverance,
 out of the Hands of this Man of *Belial*,
 was a Work of Gods wonderful Provi-
 dence. For, though this Rebellion was
 not so near *David's* Doors as the other
 was, yet *David* mistrusted this Son of
Bichri would do him more harm, than had
 been done him *hitherto*, 2 Sam. 20. 6. For the
 wretch was haughty and enraged: His
 party was very numerous; yet not more nu-
 merous, than they were perfidious and dis-
 loyal: Men that had set up for their King one
 of *Saul's* Family, while the House of *Judah*
 followed *David*: Men that consented to the
 Kings Restauration upon meer necessity, and
 yet would have gone away with the Honour
 of it: Men that had great expectations
 from *David*, and because they could not
 get their *Ends*, and obtain the Government
 of him, took up presently a mortal grudge
 against him, as if they had no part, no in-
 heritance in the Son of Jesse (as they spake
 by

by way of contempt) and so the Alarm was instantly taken by them all, *Every man to his Tents, O Israel.* This was *Sheba*, and these were his *Associates*; a desperate Leader of a very terrible Defection; nothing being more dangerous to any Prince, than the united malice of *Rebellious Spirits*, that submit, not for *Conscience sake*, but either upon *Constraint*, or for their *Interest* only.

Yet how soon did the hand of God break that dark and threatening Cloud which now covered the greatest part of *David's Kingdom*? *Joab* indeed pursued the Rebel from place to place; and at last hemmed him in. But the Victory was from *Heaven*; without any battle in the Field, without the personal valour of *Joab*, without the loss of any of *Joab's Forces* was this deliverance wrought: by the contrivance of a woman was *Sheba's Head* taken off, and cast over the Wall; by one of the *weaker Vessels* was the main thing done, *that the Excellency of the Power might be of God, and not of man*; that I may allude to the expression, *2 Cor. 4. 7.*

But there was a *Greater* deliverance than this, which I doubt not, but *David* particularly

larly thought of, when he penned this Psalm: A deliverance from a Conspiracy, that might have *swallowed up* the King, and all the people that were with him, as 'tis said of that Conspiracy, *2 Sam. 17. 16.* the very same expression, as is used at the *3d. Verse* of this Psalm: A Conspiracy that was not only near *Dauids Threshold*, but went to his very *Heart* too, the Conspiracy of his Son *Absalom*. His *bloudy Son Absalom*, that formerly had been guilty of shameful Murder. His *Ambitious Son Absalom*, whom none of those Preferments could Content, which would have contented *Sheba*; nothing would satisfie him but the *Crown*. His *ungrateful Son Absalom*, that so basely rewarded him for his *Longings* after him, when he fled from his presence to *Geshur*, and for his *Pardon*, for his *Kisses* upon his *Return*, and upon that his most *solemn*, though artificial submission at his Fathers Feet. His *perfidious Son Absalom*, that no sooner went out of his Fathers Court, but ran to the Gates to *steal away the hearts of his Fathers Subjects* with such *mean* addresses to the Populace, *O that I were made Judg* (meaning, King) *in*

the Land. His hypocritical Son *Absalom*, that pretending a desire to perform his *Vow*, declared for the *Throne*, and under colour of *Religion* raised an open and barefact *Rebellion*. This was such a dreadful Conspiracy, as made *David* himself, though a man of such Prowess and Conduct, presently to flee for his Life. For so it was that *Absalom*, what with the gracefulness and beauty of his Person, what with his Popularity, and what with other sinister and sordid Artifices, had insinuated himself strangely into peoples Affections; *the hearts of the men of Israel were after him*, saith the Scripture; so that the Conspiracy was strong; *the business was laid very broad*, for the People increased continually with *Absalom*, though at the First he was but two hundred Men strong, as we read, 2 Sam. 15. Had not the hand of God, which commands the Seas, govern'd and over-rul'd this design, the King had been utterly undone, and all his Loyal Subjects that clave to him: Such a violent agitation were disaffected People in then, that they were ready to flow to him from all Quarters, like the meeting and inundation of many Rivers to make a Deluge.

But

But that which made this Conspiracy the more terrible, was *this*, that *Achitophel* was in the head of it. *Achitophel*, that had served to corrupt and debauch the young man, *Absalom*, and had ministred to his Lusts. *Achitophel*, that False and Treacherous Villain, that had been one of *David's Counsellors*; nay, the *President* of his Council, as 'tis plainly intimated, 1 *Chron.* 37. 34. *Achitophel*, that dexterous man at *wickedness*; such a cunning and crafty Politician, that he was lookt upon as infallible, as an *Oracle*. *Achitophel*, that was so maliciously set against the King, that nothing would satisfie him, but the Assassination of his *Person*. *Achitophel*, that hardened Traytor, and cursed Reprobate, that when his Counsel and Bloudy endeavours would not take, *fled for it* presently, and through anguish and vexation hanged himself: (A sad End indeed, for any Rebel to be his own Executioner, though in some cases 'tis pity that an *Achitophel*, an *inveterate*, and *advising* Rebel should ever die in his *Bed*.)

When the highest Treason was formed by such working heads, when 'twas condu-

cted by such Politick Counsels, when 'twas Executed by such desperate Instruments, when it prosper'd on a suddain by such successful stratagems nothing could be expected, but the Kings inevitable ruine, had not the hand of God been more concern'd in the cause, than the hand of *Joab*.

Herein was manifested the great power of God, that notwithstanding all these Arts, Enterprises, and desired Events of wickedness, the whole frame of the Conspiracy was dash'd down in a moment, the King was delivered, *Peace* was restored, the whole Nation was freed from commotions and dangers; and all this, by the unexpected and surprizing death of *Absalom*, who, as God, would have it, was caught in a Wood; and hung by his Locks upon a Tree; to shew the World what a Reward all they deserve, that take up Arms, and Rebel against their Lawful Prince.

2. You have now seen some of *David's* deliverances; I mean his deliverances from *Home-bred* dangers, from Enemies that were in his own Country, in his own Bosome; which, as I conceive, *David* had an immediate eye

upon in this *Psalm*, where he blest the God of his Salvation, that he and his people were not *delivered as a Prey unto their Teeth*.

To proceed in the next place, to the consideration of our *own* deliverances, which is the necessary subject of our Meditations this day. I know not any deliverances, that can come *nearer* (perhaps not so *near*) to those of *David*, either for the *Quality*, or for the *Circumstances* of them, then those wonderful deliverances from so many *Sheba's* and *Achitophels*, which God hath from time to time wrought for this Nation: Perhaps no Age, no State, no History can shew the *Like* instances of his good Providence; so unwearied hath his Goodness been to our Princes, as if he had entailed his Mercy upon *Them*, as he did upon *David*, and upon his seed for evermore. 'Tis true (a most sad and shameful Truth, God knows) such was the monstrous-impiety of the Last Age, that it afforded one unprecedented, unparallel'd instance of Gods wrath, when that imparable Monarch, the Glory of our Reformation, and the Honour of the World, was forced to bow his head down, and to fall a Sacrifice

to the Lusts of the most barbarous Villains, as if God had forsaken him. Yet I cannot tell, but that God, who draweth Good many times out of the greatest Evil, did in that terrible juncture design to shew men the excessive *sinfulness* of their Follies, in throwing away a Felicity, always to be reflected on, but hardly ever to be *recover'd* to the Worlds End. However, that some *Compensation* might be made for that *superlative* (and otherwise *irreparable*) loss, by the due *succession*, and after *Greatness* of his Posterity, God hath *multiplied* those temporal Glories upon the *Sons*, which he took from the Father, and gave him a Blessed Eternity in *Exchange* for. And to let the World see, that resistance is criminal even when 'tis prosperous, and to punish Rebellion in a second Age, tho' it escaped in the First, God hath delivered the two Royal Brothers *from six troubles and seven*, though *Sheba* and *Abjalom*, with their wicked Confederates, joyned hand in hand to Execute a Conspiracy, which had been long a forming by the Serpentine subtilty of a twining and party colour'd *Achitophel*.

This Deliverance was manifestly the work
of

God. For first our dangers were so immense, and yet so close and privy, that it both pass'd the sagacity, and exceeded the reach of humane Force to prevent them; and nothing could deliver us from them, but the Power and Wisdom of Almighty God. What were the *Conspirators*, but the most daring and desperate Villains? Men of the most desperate *Principles*, ready and dispos'd for the most desperate *undertakings*; and either so laden with the guilt of *former Crimes*, or so linked together in the Communion of *New ones*, that nothing less could be expected, then the utmost of those mischiefs which are always acted by men of the most desperate *Fortunes*? And what was the *Conspiracy* it self, but a long studied, and now ripe Design, to draw in upon us a whole Deluge of Blood, to overwhelm Prince and People, with final slaughter, to destroy the very Name, as well as to stifle all further efforts of Loyalty, to bury our Monarch beyond all hopes of a Resurrection, to ingulph the Church in an eternal Chaos, so that you should hardly have seen the very Ruins of it, to dash down at once the whole frame of the present Govern-

Government, and to leave it to Time, and Fortune, and the Decision of the Sword, what other Model should be set up? And what would have been at the end of all this, but Irreligion and Atheism, accompanied with the most dismal Confusions, and a perpetual War, till by weak'ning and killing one another, each Party must have given a *Forreign* Power the fairest opportunity of Invading and Captivating all. Nothing could destroy such a bulky, such a barbarous Design, but the Arm of God, whose *extraordinary* providence is then wont *visibly* to interpose, when dangers are so Immense; so Imminent, and otherwise Inevitable. And the Truth is, the Conspiracy was too *great* to prosper, too excessively monstrous to give any but *Atheists* promises of *success*; the Mercy of God being such, that amidst all our *Corrections*, he hath still kept us from *Ruin*, and has always saved us from the *Ax*, though we have been often delivered most deservedly to the *Rod*.

2. Again; the Conspiracy *was laid so very broad* (as one of the Criminals himself confess) that there is little reason to doubt, but that

that innumerable numbers of disaffected men in all parts of this great Island, divers of the most *Potent*, many the most *Active*, all the most *Violent* of the Faction, were more or less actually engaged to carry the Design on; so that had not that good God wonderfully interposed, who commands the hearts, and stilleth the madness of the people, by his own secret, and unaccountable, but yet over-ruling and efficacious power, in all humane probability no way could have been left for innocence to escape. And when the Rebellion was now *begun* by the most *Forward* of the party, that gave the Alarm to the rest, who only waited for an *invitation*; to *distract* the whole Kingdom, *Sheba* had so posted himself in *one* part of it, and *Absalom* in *another*, that all such whose hearts were after *both*, had their choice given them of repairing unto *either*, had not God restrained and damp't their spirits, and made even resolute men, Cowards. This we must needs ascribe to the particular providence of God; especially if we do consider, that those *ordinary* Forces throughout the Nation, on which we confided for the

curbing and suppressing of *Rebels*, were, (for the most part) what through cowardise, what through perfidiousness, and what through both, much prepar'd, and much more desirous themselves to turn *Fugitives*.

Not but that God permitted the *Faces* of the people to gather together into a *considerable* (nay, I must call it, because we once thought it, a *formidable*) body; for never is there an inundation without a great scum. But yet, such was the good Providence of God to us, that all this was, more for our Terrour, then to our Injury: that by making us sensible of our Conquest, God might shew us our danger; which had it not appeared at our Doors, might have made no more impression upon us, than a Dream in the Night.

3. And in this, *Thirdly*, the Hand of God was most plainly seen, that after so many preparations on the one side, after so many terrours on the other, and after so many *uncertainties* on both, the Scales were turn'd so in a moment, that we no sooner heard of a *Conflict*, than we were sure of

a *Victory*, and that in such a *Nice* and *Critical* juncture, that we might have thought our selves happy, might have blest God for but a *Drawn Battle*; they that shall duely consider what a condition the Kings affairs was in that *Fatal Night*, (for it was the most *Fatal Night-work* that ever *Abalom* had in hand) how disproportionable his Majesties Forces were in Number, how secure they were, like so many good Consciencés at their Repose, how unexpectedly fire and Sword came against them, how *silently* he *stole* upon them like a *Thief*, whose design was to plunder a whole Kingdom; and yet how *suddenly* that desperate engagment ended, I do not say in a *Victory*, but in an utter defeat and *overthrow* of the *whole Faction*; they must needs look upon it as a *Miraculous* deliverance, and grant the providence of God to have been as visible then in the *Preservation* of the *Crown*, as it had been before in the *Restoration* of the *Prince* himself. Lord! how in a *moment* was that great work done which the Government had been labouring at for so many years, and yet unsuccessfully?

How soon were all the *Councils of Achitophel turned into foolishness* ; and all the Arts and Machinations of his numerous Adherents brust down all at once like a Cobweb, in the twinkling of an Eye ? After so many designs against the Monarchy and the Church, which had been so Politickly, and so deeply laid ; after so many close and Treasonable consultations that had been held ; after such along trade of Perjuries, that to the wounding of their consciences, and to the scandal of Religion had been practiced ; after so much industry that had been used in lying, Libelling, and debauching the World with wicked Principles ; after so much pains that had been taken in setting up Magistrates to overlay and stifle the Laws ; after so much villainous Hypocrisie, which profligate Souls had been guilty of even before the Altar of God ; after so many correspondences that had been maintain'd thro'out these Kingdoms to hew down all the pillars thereof ; after such a train of Arts, which they had been laying so many years to begin and carry on a Rebellion ; after such a
 vast

vast expence of time and Mony; (*Mony* like that which *Judas* received, that may cost even the *Creditors* their *Necks*) after all this, I say, and a great deal more, the whole controversie was ended as it were at a *Blow*, by a *few* men, by an hours push; and so, that those very methods which they used for the *Ruin*, have effectually served to the *Establisment* of the Throne; they have made our Prince (though against their own Wills) a *glorious King* indeed; and Us his faithful Subjects; an happy and safe People: And all, by the good Providence of our God, who for his Mercy sake govern'd and over-rul'd even *Midnight* surprises, and in that *critical* and most *dangerous* juncture kept us All from being the prey to the fury, or cruelties of those *Abaddons*.

4. And yet, *Fourthly*, the Providence of God did not stop here; but as his *bare* and *out-stretched Arm* had now unexpectedly defeated those villainous Enterprises, so to Crown the Victory after a signal manner, his vengeance pursued and overtook the *Men*, even the most *Principal* Traytors, to deliver up those to the *Law*, who had escaped the *Sword*.

This

This was a *singular* and very *remarkable* Work of God; because on this our *future* Peace and Felicity did depend: and to see how strangely God doth sometimes bring his great purposes to pass, this *Last*, this *greatest* Work was done after a most *Providential* manner, and by the *meanest* and most *ordinary* Instruments. For as that *Sheba* of the *North* was after a *Months* Invasion, taken at last by *three* *Servants*, in the *Water*; so that *Absalom* of the *West* was after his *Months* Invasion, or thereabout, caught also by *three* Men of the like *Figure* and *Condition*, and that like *Absalom* the *First*, in a *Wood*, among *Brakes* and *Trees*; and hereby God shewed his just displeasure against *All* the Rebels *both* ways, by exposing the most honourable of them to *Disgrace* and *Shame*, as well as by bringing them to capital punishment. And thus by a *Wonderful* and an *uninterrupted* course of Gods blessed providence, he hath in a very *short* time wrought one of the greatest Deliverances for us, and our Posterity; these having been (we hope) the *Last* *Efforts* of that wicked *Cause*, which for many years hath made such mischiefs
in

in the World, but (God be blessed) was brought at length to it's *extream Agonies*, and is now *Dead*: *Dead*, and I hope *Buried*, till the day of *Final Reckoning*, when it's more *valiant Patriots* will rise up in judgment, and *upbraid* these for the less fortunate successes of their more *Open* and *Notorious* Wickednesses.

That I have thus particularly observed the several steps of Gods Providence in this case; is not only to express mine own deep and humble Sense of those manifold Mercies which never fail us; or to quicken the like Sense in you, and to excite the Endeavours of us all, to give due Testimonies and Expressions of the most Religious Hearts; of Hearts *Penitent* for those Sins which drew the point of the Sword upon us, and *Thankful* for our speedy and effectual Deliverance from it.

Though these are Eucharistical acts, very suitable to the purport of this day; very necessary to be performed by us, for the infinite goodness of God to us, *when we were in trouble*: yet there are three other things, which I would by way of practical Intere-

rence draw out of this whole consideration; and methinks we are so plainly taught them by this our late Deliverance, as if God *himself* did purposely intend to direct us to these *three* things with his own *Hand*.

1. That we carry in our minds a *Fixt and Awful Remembrance of a Deity*. Good God! That ever *Atheism* should prevail in such a Land as this, where not only all *Demonstrative Arguments* have been used to prove a Being infinitely Wise, Just, and Good, to Preside over the World, but moreover where the *Presence* of God hath been so often, so long, and in all the vicissitudes and changes of this Sublunary World, *so constantly* seen and *manifested*, as if he had taken up his *Abode* with us, as if he had said of this Kingdom, as he did of *Zion*, Psal. 132. 14. *This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.*

And yet I may say truly, but to our great shame, that since the Creation of the Universe there never was such an *Atheistical* Generation, no not in the most dark, in the most distant, in the most infidel parts of the World, as this Nation hath
groaned

groaned under of late years. And yet 'tis observable, though it be very strange, that none among us have pretended greater concernment for the Reformation, for the interest, for the security of our established Religion, than those who have bid open defiance to all Religion whatsoever. Men of the most Licentious Lives, of the most seared consciences, of the most profligate Reputation : Open Drunkards, profest Adulterers, Notorious Cheats, Forsworn Rebels, Impudent Lyars, perfidious Hypocrites, and but the other day Scoffers at God, and at the very shew of piety. 'Tis enough to move the meekest, the most patient man on Earth to consider, what foreheads of steel and Adamant those impious Wretches have, that could take the confidence thus to gull and impose upon the World by a seeming zeal for *Religion*; and especially, that when they were now up in Arms for it, they should Ravish Virgins, commit Sacrilege, and drink the most villainous Healths in the Bowls of the Sanctuary, and even before the Altar of God: such a barbarous profanation, as *Belshazzar* him-

D

self

self would have dreaded amidst all his Concubines.

'Tis no wonder that the righteous God did presently write *Mene, Mene*, upon the Plaister of the Walls, and made a very *short* Work with that Kingdom, which they thought to have had; for who could think, that such monstrous Impieties could prosper? And when God did on a suddain, and after such a Providential and Signal manner, blast the designs of those wicked men, he did not only vindicate his own *Holiness*, and gain himself *Honour* upon those sons of *Belial* that were Rebels against *Himself*, as well as against their *Sovereign*; but he did that too, which was enough to Convince even the *Actors* of those wickednesses, that *verily there is a Reward for the Righteous*, and *that there is a God that Judgeth the Earth*. In which respect God was so kind and good to those his *Enemies* too, that he made their very *Punishments* to *Instruct* them, and took a direct course to convince the *Atheist* by defeating, and plaguing, and delivering up the *Traytor*: I pray God, all such of them as yet survive may be thoroughly sensible of his *Providence*,

vidence, and make a Christian use of it, *while it is called to day* ; and that all such as have not God in their *thoughts*, may learn once to make him their *Fear*, by impartially considering the *Exemplary* fall of *Absalom* (if I have not done him too *Great* an Honor in calling him *Absalom*, whose *perfidious* and *mean* spirit never argued him to be the son of a *Prince*.)

2. As for those, in the Second place, who *own* and *acknowledg* a Deity, and yet are apt to stagger (as many among us of late have done) in their belief of the *Divine Providence*, as if our trusting in God were a thing of small value, as if we and our Religion were in a dangerous case, as if ordinary means would do us no good, and as if nothing but *violent* and *indirect* courses could secure our Civil and Sacred Interests ; in the Name of God let such men seriously reflect upon this our *Late Deliverance*, and thereby learn that excellent Wisdom, in all Cases and Circumstances, *still to commit themselves to God in well doing*.

That which was the Ground (or, at least, the *Pretence*) for the late Rebellion, was this.

Unreasonable Jealousie, which some weak men have entertain'd, that the Ark of God, which hath been (blessed be God) fixed in this Kingdom, hath been so Glorious since the Reformation, is now in a tottering, in a falling Condition, so that nothing but *strong* and *Armed Hands* can support it. This, you know, is the Common Plea, which Malecontents and Rebels use for their disobedience to, and resistance of the Lords Anointed. Now I am apt to believe, that in working this late marvellous Deliverance for us, one of Gods good purposes was, to *signifie* from *Heaven*, that as he hath been all along with our *Fathers*, so He is still with *Us*, that in all circumstances and junctures, he is able to take care of us, and that his good Providence shall not be wanting to us, if we be not wanting to our Duty, but adorn our Faith with sincere obedience to Himself and his Vice-gerent, and so put our Trust and Confidence in him, as good and honest hearted Christians ought to do.

Give me leave to deal plainly with you; for the condition of the Times requires plain-dealing.

It

It hath been generally believed, that a Prince, who is in the communion of *another Church*, must needs endeavour the alteration of the *Etablisht Religion*, if it be different from his own. Men are ready to think it must *necessarily* be thus, and that it cannot possibly be *otherwise*. But this is a very great *mistake*: and to prove that it is so, I appeal to a most memorable story, that I perceive is not taken notice of, and yet the truth of it is acknowledg'd by one, that is well known to be of *Republican Principles*, and that a while ago wrote a very Seditious Book, to *Subvert our Monarchy*, and to reduce our Government to the *Venetian* form; I mean, the Author of *Plato Redivivus*. That very man tells us (*pag. 207*) that a few years since, a Duke of *Hanover* was reconciled to the *Roman Church*, and even went to *Rome* to abjure the Protestant Religion. Yet upon his return home, he lived and govern'd as he did *before*, without the least animosity of his *Subjects* for the change he had made, and without any endeavour of his to introduce any change in his *Government* or *People*, but reigned peaceably fourteen years, and then dying

dying left the Establish'd Government and Religion entire to his Brother, the Bishop of *Osnaburg*, who was a Protestant. Here now is plain *experience* and matter of *Fact*, which shews that 'tis very *possible* for a Prince to Reign very quietly and peaceably over a Church, that is of a different Faith in some things from his own. Consider this instance well: it may be a good means, by the blessing of God, to remove those inordinate jealousies, which are so destructive both of the Kings and the Peoples peace, and which we should carefully *stifle* for that reason; especially since our Prince hath given us so many *Solemn Assurances*, and in all his *actions* hitherto hath given *Real Demonstrations* of his sincerity. A Prince, not of *Absaloms* temper, *unstable, fraudulent, false*; but one of that *True Honor* and *Greatness*, that he never yet *deceived* any part of mankind, and I am perswaded never *will*; unless it be in *one* point; I mean as to their *Fears*: those indeed, he hath deceived already, and truly the World is bound with all *Thankfulness* to forgive him that.

But I was speaking of the *Providence of God* and of casting our selves upon it in all Circumstances

cumstances and Conditions. And do but consider, I beseech you, what is it, but the Providence of God, that all Princes and people live by: And what is it, but that wonderful Providence which hath made our Prince and us to out-live these late dangers, which threatned us with no less, then utter and remediless Destruction? Here we have had *fresh* Experience of Gods over-ruling Providence at *Home*, in a Deliverance, that may trouble an inquisitive Historian to find out it's parallel; if you take it all together, and consider how black the Cloud over our Heads was, and how suddainly it increased from the bigness of a mans hand, and what Assurances to many Sons of *Belial* went upon, and how ready the hearts of vast multitudes more were to run to their assistance; and what Encouragements they would have had upon the least success, and how *near* that Success was; and yet how this great *Complication* of dangers was broken, dissipated, and utterly destroyed in a *moment*, in the turn of an *hand*, in the twinkling of an *eye*, as if God was making us a *new* world after the same manner he made *this*, when he only spake the word, and it was done.

What

What can there be more, to encourage us to an intire and constant dependance upon the good Providence of God? Especially, if we remember what *David* said, when he reflected upon that satisfaction and ease of mind which was the result of his *integrity*, This I had, *because I have kept thy Commandments*, Psal. 119. 56. And this, perhaps, We have had too as the Reward of our integrity. For though we are far from ever owning the doctrine of Merits, yet 'tis not immodest to think, that God, who hath a *Respect unto the Meek, Regard to the Lowly,* and a *Favour to all such as are true of heart,* hath in this our late Deliverance shew'd some regard and favour to our *Zeal* in the late Times for true Allegiance, Justice, and Honesty, when others did not care what evil they did, as long as it tended unto good. Though for a good Conscience-sake we ran the greatest hazards, and were wrapt up in the greatest difficulties, and yet had but very little Encouragements before us, yet (blessed be God) we were mindful of our Duty, and Resolved to Live and Die by it, and acted like good Christians, though seemingly at
all

all manner of disadvantage; and all this upon that firm trust and confidence we had in the Providence of our God. And now we see his providence hath not failed us, nor have our hopes made us ashamed; but God hath marvellously done the blessed Work for us, and strangely restored us to a blessed condition, while his just judgments have been such upon the Enemies of our peace, that all those Arts and Methods which they employed for *Our* ruin, have after a most stupendious and unaccountable manner turned to their *Own*. I dare say, that if you trace over all those wicked practices which they have used for several years last past to undermine the Throne, to blow up the Church, to destroy and overthrow All; you will find that true, which *David* observed of such men in his days, that *they are sunk down in the pit that they made; that in the Net, which they had hid, their own foot is taken; that they are caught in the devices which they themselves imagined for others, that they are fallen into the ditch, that they digged with their own hands; that their mischiefs are returned up-*

upon their own heads, and their violent dealings come down upon their own Pates. Blessed be God that it is so; it is marvellous in our eyes.

3. Lastly therefore, that I may conclude all by applying my self to such as *hate* the sins of *Faction* and *unfaithfulness*; let the consideration of this astonishing deliverance, strengthen our hopes and confidence still, that God *will perfect that good work which he hath wrought in us.* I was upright before God, saith David, upon the consideration of his deliverances, in Psalm 18. *Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eye sight. With the merciful thou wilt shew thy self merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thy self upright; With the pure thou wilt shew thy self pure, and with the froward thou wilt learn frowardness.*

The course of Gods Providence is to go along with men in their *own* ways, to deal with them as they carry themselves towards that Rule of Life, which he hath laid before them; and to protect, or cast them out of his hands, according as their Trust, or their distrust

distrust is in his providence. Therefore if we do but unanimously apply our hearts carefully to observe his Will, and Act according to the Laws of honesty and Religion, we have no Reason to doubt, but God will not only preserve that establish'd Government and Religion which are so *dear* to us, but will moreover *fix* and *re-settle* both upon such sure foundations, that we shall be once again the honour and envy of Christendom.

As far as I have observed, the whole History of *England* doth not afford us an instance of Gods providence that can come any thing *near* that account which relates to our present Sovereign and his Royal Brother and Predecessor of ever blessed Memory ; unless it be that single story of *King Alfred the Great*. A Prince of that Learning, Wisdom, Clemency, Sweetness of Nature, and other such excellent Vertues, as really made him an *Honour* and *Ornament* to the Throne. And yet that excellent Prince was once reduced to those miserable straights, partly by the Invasion of Enemies from abroad, and partly through the treachery of Rebels and Deserters at

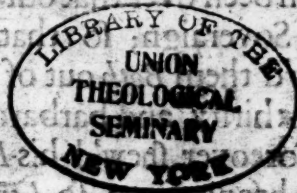
home, that he was forced to put himself into the disguise once of a common *Soldier*, another time of an *Herds-man*, and at last to abscond for a considerable time in the *West*, in a poor Cottage among *Woods* and *Moors*; a sad and woful place for a *Crowned Head* to rest in: And yet, such was his Religious dependence upon God, that though he was forsaken by his friends, environed with his Enemies, and brought to those extreme and shameful necessities, that his Mother and himself were hardly able to *subsist*, yet he doubted not but providence would one day restore him to his *just Grandieur*. And so it was, that in that very *mean Condition*, in that most *Obscure Place* he began the *Recovery* of his Fortunes; and 'tis observable, that the *Place* was in those very *Moors* in *Somersetshire* between *Taunton* and *Bridgwater*: There he began the *new* foundation of his Kingdom, raising it on still by degrees, till in a little time he became the *sole* and *absolute* Monarch of this Nation, and made it a most *flourishing* Kingdom, and gave many the most *Excellent Laws* that we enjoy at *this Hour*.

We

We know, too well, to what Miseries, Dangers, and reproachful Necessities, the Sins of this Nation exposed the Off-spring of that *Royal and Incomparable* Martyr, King *Charles the First*, of *whom the World was not worthy*. I need not speak of the *Royal Oak*, nor of the rest of those straights, which were not *unlike* those of King *Alfred*. Notwithstanding all those difficulties, the Providence of God hath been over that our *late*, and this our *present* Sovereign; so that he hath not only preserv'd them *Both* out of the hands of their bloud-thirsty, and barbarous Enemies, but hath moreover shew'd his *Power* in *Exalting* the Throne from so *Low*, to such a *Lofty* State, as if *Alfred the Great* sat in it *again*: and this we owe to the singular Providence of God in giving his Majesty this most memorable Conquest over *His and Our* Enemies at *King Alfreds quarters*.

As we are to bleſs God for his unexpressible Mercy, so let us ever put our firm hope and confidence in him; being careful still to act like good *Christians*, and honest hearted *Subjects*, and then not doubting, but that *all things will work together* (as hitherto they have done) for our Good. I

To conclude all with those Triumphant
 expressions Apocall. 19. *Hallelujah, Salvati-
 ons and Glory, and Honour, and Power be a-
 scribed unto the Lord our God, for True and
 Righteous are his Judgments: To him be gi-
 ven by us and all Churches of Christ, all
 Honour, Thanksgiving, and Adoration for
 evermore: Amen.*



FINIS.

